

## NEWS RELEASE

### Sequoia National Forest and the Giant Sequoia National Monument

1839 S. Newcomb Street, Porterville, CA 93257



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Contact: Chris Sanders, Assistant Recreation Officer

Phone: 559-784-1500

### **Sequoia National Forest Announces the Motorized Travel Management Record of Decision**

**PORTERVILLE, CA** – The Forest Service today announced that Tina Terrell, Sequoia National Forest Supervisor has finalized the Motorized Travel Management Record of Decision (ROD) for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). This decision selects Modified Alternative 3.

The new transportation system is focused on the southern portion of the forest located outside of the Giant Sequoia National Monument, on two Ranger Districts; the Kern River and Western Divide (336,988 acres). This decision is portrayed on a new Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) showing the designated system which will be available in January 2010 at no cost.

“This decision creates a manageable transportation system protecting resource values for wildlife such as the California condor, as well as, provides a fun and challenging road and trail system for local residents and other visitors to the area,” stated Terrell. “The system includes interconnected roads and trail loops for all levels of use--from the novice to expert. Most important, access to Lake Isabella shoreline is provided by implementing 16 open areas.”

Nationwide all forests are implementing the provisions of the Travel Management regulations, Subpart B and the Executive Orders which direct Federal agencies to: 1) ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled to protect the resources; 2) promote public safety, and, 3) minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands.

The important changes to note are:

- 1) condor roost areas are protected;
- 2) cross-country travel is prohibited;
- 3) motorized use is designated to a system of roads and trails, reflected in the National Forest Transportation System (NFTS);
- 4) some roads and routes allow a mixed use of: a) highway legal vehicles, and b) non-highway legal vehicles such as quads and dirt bikes;
- 5) Lake Isabella shoreline is accessed through 16 open areas (approximately 2,202 acres), for California licensed highway vehicles;
- 6) Lake Isabella non-highway legal vehicle use shifts to Cyrus Canyon;
- 7) a season of use begins (vs. year-round access) for 181 miles of routes to reduce resource damage during wet periods;
- 8) mitigation efforts are identified that must be completed prior to designating certain routes for motor vehicle use; and the
- 9) Travel Management Rule, Subpart B is implemented.

In October 2009, the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was released with a 30-day public comment period which ended on November 9, 2009. Public comments received were considered in the development of the ROD.

The Final EIS was developed by responding to the comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) regarding the issues of public access and motorized recreation. Two additional changes between the Draft EIS and Final EIS included: 1) providing access to the water's edge at Lake Isabella, and 2) motorized impacts to California condor roost areas.

**Public Meetings:**

Public meetings are scheduled in January, 2010 to discuss the decision and implementation plans at:

- January 27, 2010, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., Oddfellows Hall, Kernville, California
- January 28, 2010, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., Clarion Hotel, Bakersfield, California
- January 29, 2010, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., Marriott Hotel, Ridgecrest, California

Interested individuals and groups are invited to attend one of the above meeting dates, times and locations. For more information visit the Sequoia National Forest website:

[www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia/projects/ohv\\_route\\_designation\\_strategy/index.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia/projects/ohv_route_designation_strategy/index.html), or call Chris Sanders, Assistant Recreation Officer at: (559) 784-1500, for more information about the meetings or with any special needs related to accessibility.

**How to obtain copies of the documents:**

Copies of the Record of Decision have been mailed to everyone who commented on the Draft EIS and Final EIS. The FEIS and ROD can also be downloaded from the Forest's website at [www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia/projects/ohv\\_route\\_designation\\_strategy/index.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia/projects/ohv_route_designation_strategy/index.html). To request a copy of the ROD, Final EIS and map set, please contact Chris Sanders at Sequoia Headquarters at: (559) 784-1500. The file sizes of the maps are quite large. If high-speed internet is not available, please contact our office and request a CD.

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to the regulation at 36 CFR 215. Detailed procedures for appeal are provided in the Record of Decision.

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